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BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

COVID RULES ENFORCEMENT FALLS ON STUDENT LEADERS

While early all-student testing yielded just two positive tests, the college has asked several students to leave campus for rules violations. The burden of enforcing those rules has fallen predominantly on Residential Life and MiddView student leaders.

By CAROLINE KAPP & JAMES FINN
Senior News Editor & Editor at Large

Dozens of pages of online instructions and 151 minutes of educational videos laid out a plethora of restrictions and regulations that were put in place to make a return to campus this fall possible. Since the majority of students returned to Middlebury last Friday, those rules have become reality.

For the most part, students have followed regulations. By day, they widely obey mask guidelines when out in public on campus, usually only removing masks to eat meals. At the direction of staff, they follow delineated paths through dining halls, and students have taken to socializing safely in distanced settings on Battell Beach and the Knoll.

But nighttime gatherings that exceed 10 participants, sometimes without masks, have sprung up in the past week, leaving student Residential Life workers and orientation leaders to take on new roles as disciplinary figures tasked with curtailing gatherings that violate Covid-19 guidelines.

"For ResLife, the past three days have honestly been pretty intense," Luisa Vosmik '21, a Resident Assistant who works in sophomore housing, told The Campus. "We are all super excited to have residents living in our halls and to be able to put our training to use... That being said, there have definitely been some chaotic moments that were a bit disheartening. At times, it has felt as though other students don't recognize the impact their actions might have on our ability to remain on campus."

Dean of Students Derek Doucet is encouraged by the low number of positive tests in Middlebury's mandatory testing for students (since

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ARTS & CULTURE

RELUCTANT JOURNEYS

International students traverse a world of obstacles as U.S. limits entries

By RAIN JI
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Normally, it takes at most a day for You Tao '22.5 to travel from Beijing to Middlebury College. This year — between the passing of travel bans and the global Covid-19 pandemic — it took him almost a month.

On Jan. 31, President Trump announced that all aliens who had spent time in mainland China within the past 14 days would be denied entry to the U.S., including F-1 visa holders such as You.

You became one of many Chinese international students forced to make a decision about whether or not to return to campus. To bypass the proclamation, he knew he had to spend 14 days in a third country open to Chinese tourists. But the resources associated with spending 14 days in a different country posed a challenge, not to mention health risks during international travels.

At the end of July, You finally decided to return to Middlebury.

"Being able to see my girlfriend was the decisive factor," he said. "But it wasn't the only reason." He explained that poor internet connection and the substantial 12-hour time difference make taking remote classes from China difficult.

You did not expect that he would be facing such a difficult choice. He had hope that the Trump administration would lift the travel ban before the end of summer.

Before flying to the U.S., You first spent 14 days in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. His family did not support the trip at first because they thought the journey was too long and risky, but his mother eventually deemed the travel route safe enough.

COURTESY PHOTO

On his journey back to Middlebury from China, Tao You '22.5 spent 14 days in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where he took this photo. "People are just casually going about their days," he said.

In Phnom Penh, he completed mandatory room quarantine while waiting for his initial Covid-19 test result. He was then released on the second day, upon which he observed

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Staff, cautiously optimistic, face increased workload as students return

By JAKE GAUGHAN
Opinion Editor

As total Covid-19 cases in the United States topped six million late last month, thousands of students from all over the world returned to Middlebury in anticipation of a largely in-person fall semester. Staff members' experiences have varied greatly across departments since the college announced its fall plans in June and subsequently put in place a hiring freeze. Many staff now deal with uncertainty and the looming threat of furloughs should students be evacuated prematurely this semester.

Cautious optimism

Many community members, including staff, feared that students' return would bring the same infection spikes — and resulting campus closures — that have plagued colleges and universities across the country.

"I'm cautiously optimistic," said Katie Gillespie, associate director for research compliance and a representative on the Staff Council. "The test results that have come back are very promising."

Following Day Zero and Day Seven testing, just two students have tested positive for Covid-19. Despite the encouraging signs, many worry that cases will eventually spike.

"I am concerned a little bit about

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First years grapple with a college experience marred by the pandemic

BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

By HANNAH BENSEN
News Editor

As upperclassmen returned to a campus that felt foreign in many ways, first-year students embarked on a college experience shaped by Covid-19 — a reality that is the only one they have ever known.

During first-year move-in on Aug. 26 students heaved boxes and suitcases into their dorm rooms alone while parents waited in their vehicles and said their farewells wearing masks. A 36-hour room quarantine replaced the square-dance and the ice cream party frenzy that traditionally characterize the first days of Middlebury. Upon their release to campus quarantine, they attended socially distanced meet-and-greets and took sunset strolls to the Knoll in lieu of three-day MiddView trips.

Ella Bode '24 had never been to Middlebury prior to move-in. After receiving her negative Covid-19 test result the morning of Aug. 28, she ventured onto campus for the first time with her roommate.

"I was just so excited to finally be outside and see everything for myself. I was surprised at how similar a lot of the buildings looked and by how much green there is. There's just grass and trees everywhere," said Bode, who hails from North Carolina. "My favorite place on campus has to be the Knoll or by the athletic fields where you can see all the mountains."

First-years only have second-hand knowledge of college life, acquired from movies, books and the stories of those who have come before them — all of which were conceived in a pre-pandemic world. These are their only reference points by which to compare their limited time in college. Many first-years interviewed for this

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SPORTS

Fall coaches adjust to a season without competitive play

By BRINLEA LA BARGE
Sports Editor

Fall 2020 once looked promising for Middlebury athletics. The football team sought to extend its reign as NESCAC Champions, field hockey had eyes on its fourth consecutive NCAA title and several other sports teams anticipated a competitive season of play with their Division III peers. However, when the NESCAC presidents announced the cancellation of fall sports competition in early July, teams across campus began to brainstorm ways to make the autumn months as productive as possible.

Now that fall sports practices have officially commenced, coaches and athletes are adjusting to the new safety precautions on campus. For Bob Ritter, head coach of the football team, that means adopting an innovative approach to practicing this fall, focusing more on individual technique, stretching, speed and agility. He plans to shorten the amount of time the team spends on the playing field, splitting his squad into smaller pods.

"The way we're beginning is going to look very different," Ritter said. "We won't have any helmets or equipment to start, and everything we do is just going to be like the other regulations. We'll be six feet apart

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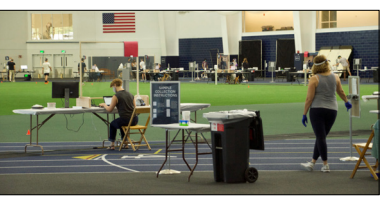
Volleyball head coach Sarah Raunecker (second from the right) coaches her athletes during the first practice of the fall season on Saturday, Sept. 5.

NEWS



Middlebury holds breath as Covid case number sits at two
By TONY SJODIN

Economic downturn and Covid-19 precautions bring tuition and endowment draw increases
By TONY SJODIN

LOCAL

Porter Medical Center prepares for return of students in a fall semester transformed by the pandemic
By BECCA AMEN

More Middlebury families turn to home births and midwives amid pandemic
By FLORENCE WU

ARTS & CULTURE

Jay Parini's "Borges and Me": Beyond Just a Memoir
By JOHN VAALER

The only dating guide you'll need this fall semester
By EDYTH MOLDOW

Museum of Art plans spring 2021 reopening
By HAEUN PARK

OPINION

Environmentalism at Midd has roots in exclusion
By ANDRÉS OYAGA

Middlebury is just learning to deal with students in crisis, but it shouldn't be
By COOPER SIEGEL

Snake oil and student loans
By JOSEPH LEVINE

MASK OFF, MIDD: A college senior's take on romance amid Covid
By MARIA KAOURIS

SPORTS

Athlete of the Week: Erin Nicholas '21
By NIAMH CARTY

Life looks different and so does the student body: Athletes on leave
By JENNY LANGERMAN